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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
185 in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

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493 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
494 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
●345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
347 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

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the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together.

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands.

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive

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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
345 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-
873 something to twenty.

Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
345 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
873 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
575 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
345 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
575 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

159 I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
185 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT

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873 We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how